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day, of the character of its inhabitants, of the industries in which they are engaged and of the position in history that the country occupies. His work also includes discussions of disputed opinions as to the position of localities or objects mentioned in ancient history and descriptions of many of the ancient ruins.

Across Yunnan. A Journey of Surprises, including an Account of the Remarkable French Railway Line now completed to Yunnan-fu. By Archibald Little. 164 p., map and 16 illustrations. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., London, 1910. 3s. 6d.

Yunnan, until recently the least-known part of China proper, is coming more and more into notice. We have now two good books in English on this western province. Major Davies published an exceptional work on Yunnan (*Bull.* 1909, p. 651), which was the record of four journeys in the province to ascertain the feasibility of constructing a railroad between India and the Yangtse river. The present work was originally written by Mr. Little as letters to the *North China Herald*. This traveller and author died before his letters were prepared for publication and his book has been edited by his wife. Mr. Little was well known for his long travels in China and his vivid and painstaking descriptions of what he saw and heard. His last book contains the first extended description written in English of Yunnan from the Tonkin border to the Yangtse river; also much information about the French railroad from Hanoi to Yunnan-fu opened last year.

AUSTRALASIA AND POLYNESIA

Hawaii and its Volcanoes. By Charles H. Hitchcock, LL.D. viii and 314 pp., 68 plates, including maps, and index. Large 8vo. The Hawaiian Gazette Company, Honolulu, 1909. \$2.

The object of this book is "to describe correctly the phenomena connected with the discharges of molten lava from the two great Hawaiian volcanoes." For this purpose the author has collected and published (—or re-published, as the case may be—) the records of the known visits to those volcanoes from the early explorers to modern tourists. These records constitute 206 out of 289 text pages of the book. They are preceded by a chapter on the physiography of the Hawaiian archipelago, and followed by another on the Hawaiian type of volcanic action; an appendix of 15 more pages forms the conclusion.

It may be questioned whether it was necessary to devote such a large part of the book to the collection of all that testimony, most of which has been published before in scientific and other magazines. In this, their original form, they have an actual interest only for the scientist, as raw material for the study of vulcanism; to him however, they have, with few exceptions, long been accessible, and he would care less for a chance to possess them in book form than for the conclusions Mr. Hitchcock derives from them. The lay reader, on the other hand, can hardly be expected to have that scholarly interest in the matter that will enable him to read over again and again descriptions of pretty much the same story with all their unavoidable repetition, and will, in his turn, skip the larger part of this matter in order to get to the Professor's opinions on it. With a few exceptions, therefore, among which the diary of the botanist of Vancouver's expedition, Archibald Menzies, deserves especial mention, this, by far the largest, part of the book seems a rather superfluous ballast which only serves to make the book more bulky and, consequently, more expensive.

When one buys a book on Hawaii by a noted scientist it is the observations

and opinions of the author that he wants to obtain, not those of several dozen of miscellaneous and, to him, unknown observers. In its present shape, the book ought to have another title; but it might be preferable, after all, to omit most of parts 2 and 3, and let the book be true to its name: "Hawaii and its Volcanoes, by Prof. Hitchcock." As things are, the author's part of the work is limited to parts 1, 4, and the appendix, which is a little less than one-third of the whole book. Physiographically he distinguishes two classes of islands in the archipelago; the Low and the High, and the latter he subdivides into the "Lowest (e. g. uninhabited) of the High Islands," or those that do not rise more than 1,000 ft. above sea level, and the "High Inhabited Islands," or those above 1,000 ft. high. They all seem to rest on a submarine foundation of tertiary limestone which is traversed by eruptives.

Those called low are either swept by the waves in time of storms, or are simply reefs or shoals. They are partly sandy, partly shrubby; among them Laysan Island is noted for its birds and guano. The same is true of Nihoa, among the Lowest of the High Islands. Among the High Islands, Niihau is one great sheep ranch which has, during the last forty years, been in possession of one white family; and it is worthy of note that, in spite of the absence of any oppression of the, originally, 1,000 natives of the island, they have dwindled away under the contact of Eastern civilization just like their cousins on the continents, until there are now less than 200 of them left. Kauai is renowned for its good soil which has made it the "Garden Island" of the archipelago. It seems to be the oldest of the islands because its flora is the richest and most individual in species of any on the islands, and it is also celebrated for its agate shells of which there are over 200 species with 800 or 1,000 varieties, each of which is confined to a small section of territory, so that the most widely divergent forms are found in the valleys most distant from each other. Oahu and Maui are doublet islands formed each by two volcanoes whose districts have been connected by more recent necks; and Hawaii is, likewise, the product of her five volcanoes, of which two are still active. It is on these that the author establishes the Hawaiian type of vulcanism as characterized by a caldera, basalt, the most easily fused of all volcanic rocks, the development of an ascensive column from whose summit lakes of molten lava accumulate and flow away intermittently, a sympathetic uprising in adjacent calderas, the building up of domes rather than cones from material forced up from below by subterranean power, magnificent fountains of fire, and usually by rather quiet eruptions and few earthquakes, (p. 286). This definition is, however, not based solely upon the contents of this book, as descriptions of the "Hawaiian type" which agree almost literally with this have found their way already into foreign textbooks of geology.

In the last chapter the author touches upon the similarities of the Hawaiian and Lunar volcanoes, as demonstrated by Prof. Pickering, but without getting beyond the statement that "it is not practicable to set forth farther the similarities between the Lunar and Hawaiian volcanic features.

MARTHA K. GENTHE.

The Official Guide of Western Australia. 256 pp., and many illustrations. Second Edition. E. S. Wigg & Son, Perth, Dec., 1909.

A folio containing historical, geographical and economic information about Western Australia, copiously illustrated, and with many advertisements bound in with the text. Useful to those who contemplate settling in the State and for general reference.